

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
From: Dave Reser, LC Representative
Subject: Discussion paper: Hidden relationships in attributes (examples: RDA 9.4.1.4.2, 9.13, 10.6, 11.3, 16.2.2)

Thanks to the DNB for outlining the issues for discussion for the attributes that could also be treated as relationships in RDA. We have the following comments, keyed to the outline of the discussion paper.

2.1: Relationships Modelled as Attributes

RDA 9.13 Affiliation

This attribute of the person can be treated by LC/PCC as an attribute, a relationship, or both. There are advantages to either approach—see the response at 5.a) below.

RDA 10.6 Prominent Member of the Family

Treating a prominent (or any) member of a family as a relationship to a family is certainly possible in RDA (with or without the relationship designators at K.3.1). The element 10.6 “Prominent Member of the Family” might in fact have been better defined as “Other distinguishing characteristic of the family”, but note that element was not defined in RDA as it was for persons, corporate bodies, etc.

RDA 11.3 Place Associated with the Corporate Body

We agree that this is another potential attribute that *could* be treated as a relationship once RDA Chapter 37 and Appendix L are developed, and note that 6JSC/Chair/12/2014/Rev/1 seeks advice from the JSC Places Working Group on this topic. Providing reciprocal relationships between place and other agent could get unwieldy (e.g., identifying all of the persons born in New York), see 5. below for more on that topic. We note that the same argument could be made about Place of Origin of the Work.

2.2 Relationships Modelled as Parts of Attributes

RDA 9.4.1.4.2 Consorts of Royal Persons

We understand that the long legacy practice of identifying consorts in the context of the royal person they are related to is a practice that seems more to be relationship information than attribute information. However, some reference sources list the consorts of royal persons similarly. For example, in the *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, the wife of King George V is listed as **Mary**

[Princess Mary of Teck] (1867–1953), queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and the British dominions beyond the seas, and empress of India, consort of George V. Her authorized access point in RDA is **Mary, Queen, consort of George V, King of Great Britain, 1867-1953**. We agree that the establishment of appropriate relationship designator(s) in Appendix K to cover the relationship would be appropriate.

RDA 16.2.2 Preferred Name of the Place

As noted above, the advice of the JSC Places Working Group will be of interest.

3. Reasons for the Present Situation

3.1 Identification

We suspect that the issue of “identification” as outlined by DNB is accurate, coupled with the need (in some cases) for the attribute to be used in access points for the agencies/scenarios that require an authorized access point.

3.2 Access points

While we understand the point that DNB is making, we would prefer to keep defined relationships out of access points if it can be avoided. A relationship could be made at the preference of the cataloging agency, and an agency could decide to omit such “relationships” from access points if desired.

4. Possible Advantages of Revision

See responses to section 5.

5. Questions to the JSC

a) As DNB pointed out, the designers of FRAD understood that some attributes could also be expressed as relationships (or as both attributes and relationships). When to apply one approach or the other might be a policy reached by a cataloging agency or consortium, and that choice may be influenced by such things as content markup standards, system functionality (whether the attribute or relationship may be actionable and linked), the question of whether the entity in a relationships needs to be “established” for linking purposes, etc. For example, the attribute **Affiliation** has been one that the Program for Cooperative Cataloging allows to be recorded as an *attribute* in MARC 373. PCC also allows the *relationship* to be made in MARC 5XX. PCC does provide some advice in these cases, such as preferring controlled vocabularies in MARC 373 (which in the case of the LC/NACO authority file would be an authorized access point for the related entity, rather than just the “preferred name” called for in 9.13). There is also the question, when used as a relationship, how ‘reciprocal’ the relationship should be. For example, indicating that “James Billington” is an employee of the Library of

Congress might be a useful relationship to make on his authority record (in the current MARC authority environment); however, the reciprocal relationship could become problematic-- relating several thousand current and former employees on the record for the Library of Congress would be difficult to manage in our current environment. Having the flexibility to use *either* approach seems desirable to us for now. Changes in systems and environments will likely result in different decisions in the future.

b) Yes, modeling relationship elements and relationship designators would be desirable for some relationships, but we don't think that the attributes themselves should be deprecated in these situations.

c) Yes, there may be some advantages, although this might be dependent on how well relationships work in a given environment, the ability to continue to use attributes in access points, how reciprocal relationships should be, etc. Again, flexibility for different frameworks to use the approach most appropriate would be key.

d) As noted, some work is already ongoing (JSC Places Working Group), and some of the relationship designators proposed in 6JSC/ALA/25 might also prove useful.